

Best Practices for Facilitating Live Online Classes: Five Keys to Success

Reference Guide

Classroom vs. Online Facilitation

What's the same? What's different?

Technology	Skills	Engagement
Online learning uses a web-based classroom platform in lieu of a traditional classroom.	Virtual facilitators need to enhance their skill, specifically in two areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- multi-tasking- vocal techniques.	Virtual facilitators engage participants using the platform tools and dialogue techniques.

Online Facilitation Skills

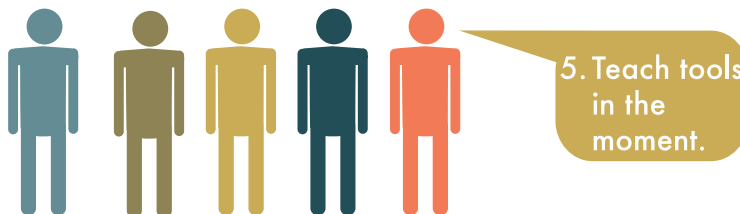
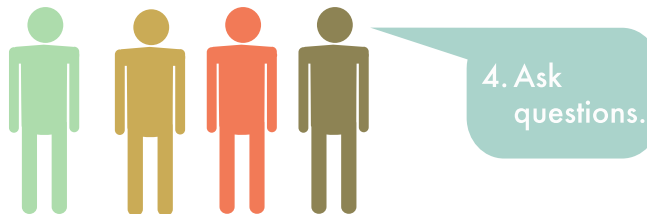
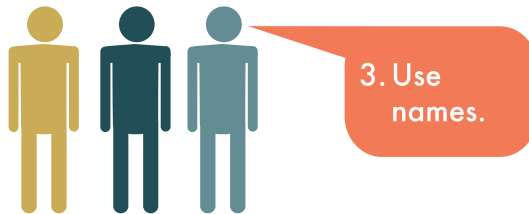
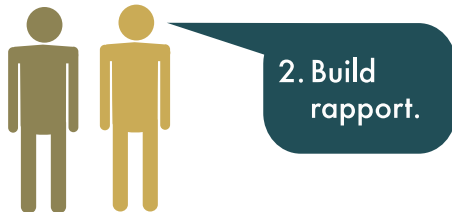
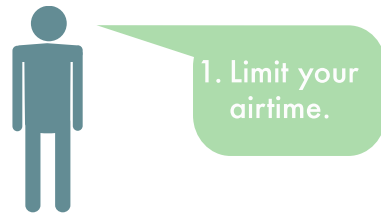
There are five key skills that effective virtual facilitators must master in order to be successful in the online classroom:

Effective Virtual Facilitators are..

Technology-Savvy	Comfort with technology comes from expertly learning the virtual platform and every one of its features. If this skill doesn't come naturally, a willingness to learn, explore, and experiment is essential to success.
Able to engage an unseen audience	Virtual learners join online from remote locations. Even though they are alone, they need to feel connected to the content and to their fellow classmates. It's the facilitator who enables these connections.
Make learners feel comfortable with the technology and the virtual classroom	Learners will be able to focus on the content and practicing new skills when they are comfortable with the technology. Make it simple and easy for everyone to join in, follow along, and participate.
Able to multi-task with ease	Practice switching from one task to another with speed and agility. Keep your eyes on the participant list and communication tools, with just quick glances to other parts of the screen. Just like driving, it gets easier over time.
Apply adult learning principles in the virtual classroom	Remember everything you already know about adult learners, and apply that information to the online classroom. Adults want to be involved, engaged, and in control. They bring their wealth of experience, and need to know 'what's in it for me?'

Facilitator Engagement Techniques

There are five key techniques facilitators should use to engage participants:



Virtual Delivery Self-Assessment

Rate yourself on the following components of virtual delivery.

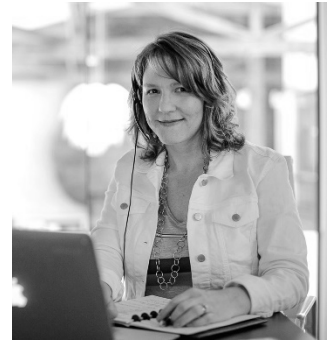
Skill (“I strive to...”)	Rating 5 = excellent 3 = average 1 = needs improvement
Create a welcoming online environment	
Adapt content to make it relevant to learners (i.e. stories, examples, etc.)	
Invite learners into the conversation from the start	
Create opportunity for discussion and dialogue using the tools	
Draw out learners who are silent	
Handle technology challenges with ease	
Ask appropriate mix of questions (open, closed, overhead, directed)	
Give instructions for how to respond to each question (poll? chat? raise hand? verbal? etc.)	
Refer to, but don’t read, slides	
Maintain a learner-centered mindset	
Show interest in learners by limiting airtime	
Use learners’ names frequently and appropriately	
Use a conversational tone	
Speak clearly and audibly	
Convey enthusiasm for the topic	
Sound energetic and confident	
Use all available platform tools	
Total:	

Individual Action Plan

Use this form to create an individual action plan for continuous improvement and ongoing development as a virtual facilitator.

Action	By When?	Comments
<i>ex. Use the platform at least once per week to practice using tools</i>	<i>March 31, 2018</i>	<i>Remember to invite others to join in for practice with me, coordinate with Emma and John for this.</i>
<i>ex. Record my voice and listen back to hear filler words or other verbal clutter that should be eliminated</i>	<i>Jan 15, 2018</i>	

About Your Facilitator: Cindy Huggett, CPLP



Cindy Huggett, CPLP is the author of three books on virtual training: [*Virtual Training Tools and Templates: An Action Guide to Live Online Learning*](#) (2017), [*The Virtual Training Guidebook: How to Design, Deliver, and Implement Live Online Learning*](#) (2014), [*Virtual Training Basics*](#) (2010), and the coauthor and contributor to many other articles and publications. She partners with her clients to help them transition from the face-to-face to the virtual classroom, and works with them to design online and blended learning solutions.

Cindy is a sought-after conference speaker, and has presented multiple times at the ATD (formerly ASTD) International Conference and Expo, TechKnowledge, Training, DevLearn, as well as the Online Learning Conference, Masie's Learning, and the Annual SHRM Conference. Her online webinars have been attended by thousands of people around the globe. And she's one of only a handful of worldwide trainers to have been chosen to deliver ATD's Master Trainer and Master Instructional Designer Programs.

With over twenty-five years of overall professional experience, Cindy has worked in various industries including technology, construction, higher education, retail and the public sector. Her management and global experience includes serving as the regional Director of Training and Operations for an international software training company, and the Learning and Development manager for a global mechanical contractor.

Cindy holds a Master's degree in Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Bachelor's degree from James Madison University. Cindy was also one of the first to earn the prestigious Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) designation.

As Chair of ASTD's National Advisors for Chapters, Cindy served on the national ATD (formerly ASTD) Board of Directors in 2009-2010. She was recognized by the *Triangle Business Journal* as a "40-Under-40" Award recipient in 2003. She also co-founded a non-profit organization to promote volunteering and community service in her local area. She's passionate about helping others succeed and brings that dedication and commitment to every project she undertakes.